



VetsWork GreenCorps Program Overview

VETSWORK GREENCORPS PROGRAM

AMERICORPS OVERVIEW

[AmeriCorps](#) is a national service program that engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service each year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, community, and faith-based groups across the country. All VetsWork GreenCorps Interns are enrolled as AmeriCorps members for the duration of the program. AmeriCorps is a great way for military veterans to continue participating in national service.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The [Mt. Adams Institute \(MAI\)](#) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through education, service learning and career development. VetsWork GreenCorps is an AmeriCorps program of the Mt. Adams Institute. It serves as a career development program for military veterans interested in jobs in public lands and natural resources management; specifically, in fuels reduction/vegetation management and wildland firefighting training. VetsWork GreenCorps participants engage in an internship with the [Umatilla National Forest \(UNF\)](#) that blends hands-on experience with professional development. During this placement, Interns **will not** be dispatched on any firefighting assignments but will gain all the necessary training and certifications required to be hired on to a fire crew. As a result, VetsWork GreenCorps participants increase their employment opportunities while supporting the work of the Umatilla National Forest's fire prevention plan. While the Mt. Adams Institute cannot guarantee employment at the end of the internship, nearly all participants do have the opportunity to be hired for seasonal (fuels reduction / wildland firefighter) employment with the UNF.

Participants are required to commit to the full 13 weeks of the program. (Because our Interns have a very strong chance of being hired at the end of the 13-week internship, planning for the fire season should be considered – July through October.) Most day-to-day supervision and mentorship for participants comes from UNF staff. MAI plays a support role through human resource functions, connection to resources, career development support and finding meaning in careers through connections to the natural world.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. military veterans
- Ages 21 - 37
- Must have an honorable discharge (general under honorable discharge considered on a case-by-case basis).
- Ability to commit to 13-week program

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

MAI staff, Project Supervisors and Interns, are made up of individuals with varying backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, values, communication styles and goals. We welcome each Intern to bring their full and total self with them into our program, including their varying levels of knowledge about racial equity, social justice, community service, and environmental stewardship. We will do our best to continually center and uplift the voices and experiences of those who are historically marginalized – both within our program and out in the community. We are committed to creating a place in which to share our differences and dialogue in a climate of equity, inclusion, mutual respect, trust and professionalism.

COMMITMENT & SCHEDULE

VetsWork GreenCorps participants must be able to commit to 13 weeks of service. In 13 weeks, Interns must log at least 490 hours of AmeriCorps service time. Positions are full time, an average of 40 hours per week, so most participants do

not have difficulty meeting the minimum. (40 hours per week X 13 weeks = 520 hours). Your living allowance amount will not change regardless of the number of hours that you work per week. VetsWork GreenCorps Interns will typically serve four, 10 hour days (Monday-Thursday.)

At the start of the term, Interns will participate in a mandatory 2-day orientation, on site at the bunkhouse facilities where the interns will live. Activities include but are not limited to an introduction to program intent, expectations and components, hiring paperwork, outdoor adventure(s), and community service project(s). This is our chance to get to know you better and set expectations.

Interns will need to support the goals of AmeriCorps, MAI and the Project Partners by being a positive ambassador and upholding all values and policies.

CHALLENGE

Our program is designed to promote individual growth through challenge and opportunity. We recognize that both challenges and opportunities show up differently for different people. We prioritize supporting Interns as they lean into their growth edges without putting folks at risk. No matter what your level of experience, we ask that you come to this program expecting and seeking the opportunity to grow and learn.

COVID-19

Mt. Adams Institute (MAI) is committed to the health and safety of its staff, Interns, board, Partnering Organizations and community members. With the spread of COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by SARS-Co V-2 virus, MAI must remain committed to its responsibility to help mitigate the outbreak and keep all MAI associates safe. Everyone involved with our program must be willing to respond to COVID-19 restrictions as they arise. Interns will be required to follow the policies at their service site while serving and living in site housing, and this includes any changes that are implemented throughout the course of the program. These policies may include masking/social distancing mandates; remote/virtual work; altered field duties and other restrictions determined necessary to keep site staff, partners and the public safe. Accepting a position means accepting the current requirements and any updates to those requirements while you are enrolled in the program.

During the service site interviews, it is important to inquire and understand each site's current requirements.

VACCINATIONS

In accordance with Mt. Adams Institute's duty and commitment to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of known hazards, we are adopting an organization wide policy requiring COVID-19 vaccinations.

We take this action with consideration of the importance of individually held rights / beliefs, the requirements being placed upon us by our federal partners and the desire to safeguard the health of our employees and their families; our participants; our partners; and the communities in which we live and serve; from COVID-19, for which vaccinations significantly reduce risk of transmission. See our [website](#) for policy details.

VetsWork GreenCorps positions are contingent upon proof of vaccination against Covid-19 with the ability to provide documentation. This position serves alongside a crew of 20 people (other interns and Forest Service staff) that live and travel together for the entire term of service.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers an individual fully vaccinated against Covid-19, if they are:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

If you do not meet these requirements, you are not fully vaccinated.

This policy will comply with all applicable laws and is based on guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and local health authorities, as applicable.

Here are some resources about the Covid-19 vaccination:

- [What are the different vaccines available?](#)
- [How does the vaccine work?](#)
- [The vaccination is free to people living in the United States](#)
- [How do I find and schedule a Covid-19 vaccine?](#)
- [How do I obtain a vaccination card record?](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about the Covid-19 vaccination](#)

COMMUNICATION

Effective service requires thorough communication. We expect Interns who join VetsWork GreenCorps to work to communicate effectively with other Interns, MAI staff, Project Supervisors and community stakeholders. We believe that strong, positive communication will help us:

- Build stronger relationships across differences.
- Be more equitable and culturally responsive
- Improve programmatically to meet the changing needs of the region.
- Explore solutions to resolve issues
- Share the challenges and celebrations of the service we do.
- Promote professionalism.

PAPERWORK

As a federally funded program, our Interns are required to document their service and submit necessary paperwork. Interns will complete monthly timesheets, and a final evaluation. Our expectation is that all paperwork will be completed correctly and turned in on time. Our staff is available to answer questions and provide the necessary direction and support.

EVALUATION

We value constructive feedback and strive for continuous improvement within all aspects of our program. Our improvement process relies heavily on input from our Interns, Project Supervisors and community stakeholders. As a result, Interns will be asked to provide feedback for many aspects of our program. In addition, each Intern will participate in a formal performance evaluation during their term of service. These evaluations are designed to provide constructive feedback to the Intern regarding their performance. Interns are responsible for collecting the information necessary to report on their project site accomplishments.

IDENTIFIERS

All Interns are issued AmeriCorps/program gear. Interns will use their own discretion as to which type of identifier is appropriate for the project situation and site.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

All positions (Staff and Interns) with MAI/AmeriCorps are required to complete a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) that is compliant with CNCS standards. Enrollment and retention with our program are conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory criminal history report from the following: National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW), State of Residence, State of Service and FBI criminal identification systems. MAI uses the following providers to obtain these checks:

- [Fieldprint](#) - Conducts FBI criminal identification fingerprint checks.
- [Truescreen](#) - Conducts State of Service, State of Residence, and National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) checks.

MAI will share the results within the program, as appropriate, to make final hiring decisions. Staff and Interns have the right to review the factual accuracy of the result before action is taken to exclude them from a position.

CELL COVERAGE

The VetsWork GreenCorps service site is located in Ukiah, OR. This is a very remote location, with extremely limited cell phone coverage. Your carrier may not be accessible at this site. Check with your supervisor to learn the best carrier for your service area. The bunkhouse is equipped with a landline phone, and limited wifi.

EQUIPMENT

The service site will provide the equipment needed for Interns to perform their duties. The exceptions are personal clothing including, but not limited to work boots, rain gear, warm clothing, gloves, etc. It is important to check with the service site during your interview about local weather conditions and personal equipment they feel may be necessary.

PRIOR SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Interns may have previously served in an AmeriCorps program. While AmeriCorps has the same guidelines nationwide, each program can be very different. It is important to approach each term of AmeriCorps with an open mind.

AmeriCorps Interns can enroll in multiple terms of service that add up to the value of two full-time education awards. In other words, you can blend summer, part-time and full-time service positions and receive awards as long as the combined service terms don't exceed two full education awards. (You can also serve without receiving an Education Award up to a maximum number of terms outlined below.)

In blending summer, part-time, and full-time terms, you can serve a maximum:

- 4 with AmeriCorps State and National (includes MAI's positions)
- 5 one-year terms with VISTA
- 2 with NCCC

It is the applicant's responsibility to indicate on their application whether they have had previous terms of AmeriCorps. Misinformation or omission of information may result in disqualification and/or termination.

POSITION FUNDING & PARTNER CONTRACTS

All positions are contingent on funding from AmeriCorps and MAI Partners as well as finalization of contracts/agreements.

BENEFITS

Service Term	Living Allowance	Education Award	Leave	Term Dates
490 hrs (13-weeks)	\$4,875 (\$357 weekly)	\$1,718.25	30 hrs	April 18, 2022 to July 15, 2022

SERVICE TERM

All VetsWork GreenCorps AmeriCorps Interns will be required to serve a minimum of 490 hours over 13 weeks. The 2022 start and end dates are April 18, 2022 to July 15, 2022.

Interns are required to successfully complete all of their specific program requirements and serve the entire term of service.

LIVING ALLOWANCE

Mt. Adams Institute (MAI) Interns receive a living allowance of \$4,875 paid over 13 weeks (\$375 weekly, before taxes). Deductions, such as FICA and federal and state taxes (when applicable), will be withheld each month.

The living allowance is distributed by direct deposit to the Intern's bank/credit union or Visa Payroll Card. This living allowance is dispensed in monthly installments on the 10th of the month. Interns will receive their first check on May 10, 2022 and their last one on August 10, 2022; If either date falls on a weekend or holiday the living allowance is deposited on the first business day following the weekend or holiday.

LIFE ON THE LIVING ALLOWANCE

Life on the AmeriCorps living allowance has inherent challenges, and for some people can be quite stressful. We encourage applicants to consider their finances and their ability to support their basic needs prior to accepting a position.

It is very important that Interns consider, in advance, if this financial situation will prevent them from accessing a positive and meaningful service experience with MAI. We welcome your questions, thoughts or concerns at any time during the recruitment process.

[Here is an interactive budget worksheet](#) you can use as a resource to determine if this program is financially feasible for you.

EDUCATION AWARD

The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is a benefit AmeriCorps Interns receive upon successful completion of their term of service. The education award is \$1,718.25 and can be used to pay for future tuition at federally recognized schools and/or to repay qualifying student loans. There are [general terms](#) that guide the use of the award and a process to follow to access your funds. The education award is subject to federal [taxes](#), in the calendar year that it is used.

FORBEARANCE

VetsWork Interns are eligible to temporarily postpone the repayment of qualified student loans through an action called forbearance. While in [forbearance](#), payments do not need to be made on loans, but they will continue to accrue interest. When the term of service is successfully completed, Interns must request that the National Service Trust pay the interest that accrued during the service period.

Once enrolled, VetsWork GreenCorps Interns can easily and quickly request the forbearance on-line through [My AmeriCorps](#). When the term of service is complete, loans will automatically revert to repayment status.

AmeriCorps cannot approve or disapprove forbearance requests; it can only verify your status as enrolled in a national service position. If a loan is in default, or in forbearance more than 3 times, it may not be eligible for this forbearance. **It is important to check with your loan provider to make sure your loan applies.**

LEAVE

Flexibility is built into the calendar to accommodate holidays, sick and personal leave. 490 hour Interns have 30 hours of personal/sick leave and are responsible for communicating time off needs with their supervisor. Living allowances will be paid during personal leave, but service hours will not be earned during this time. This is based on a 40-hour average service week.

HOUSING

VetsWork GreenCorps participants have free housing available at the Forest Service owned Frazier Bunkhouse. Those participants hired by the Forest Service at the end of the 13-week MAI program will be asked to pay the daily rate of between \$6-\$10 per day.

- Frazier Bunkhouse is very remotely located. The nearest full-service town is La Grande, OR about 45 minutes away. Cell and internet communication is very limited. Participants share a room with one other person, but the 20-person crew shares all communal areas. The make-up of the crew is co-ed.
- Frazier Bunkhouse is a drug, alcohol, firearm, and pet free location. This is a policy created at the Washington D.C. level.

TRANSPORTATION

Interns are responsible for their own transportation to the Frazier Bunkhouse. Site vehicles will be available for work related travel. The town of Ukiah, OR (where the Forest Service district office is located) is a small town of approximately 250 people. There are no major grocery stores, doctor's offices or other similar services. The Frazier Bunkhouse where VetsWork GreenCorps members live is 17 miles from the town of Ukiah.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Formerly and commonly known as the Food Stamp Program, SNAP is a food assistance program that is provided by each state. AmeriCorps Interns may be eligible for assistance, but MAI cannot guarantee it. MAI will provide a letter of appointment at Orientation confirming the AmeriCorps living allowance is not counted towards the wage calculation. Interns will be responsible for signing up for the program on their own time, if they choose. Application materials are located at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap>.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

To be eligible for MAI medical insurance coverage, Interns must be serving a minimum of 1700 & 1200 hours, so VetsWork GreenCorps Interns do not qualify for MAI medical insurance coverage.

CHILDCARE ALLOWANCE

The AmeriCorps Child Care Benefit Program is available for qualified, active, full-time AmeriCorps Interns who need the benefit to serve. Childcare allowance is provided through [GAP Solutions](#) and to be eligible you must be: 1) a full-time, active Intern; 2) the parent or full-time guardian of a child under 13 years of age who resides with the Intern; and 3) meet the [family income guidelines](#). Childcare benefits are paid directly to qualified childcare providers for all or part of the Intern's childcare costs.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

VETERANS RECRUITMENT APPOINTMENT (VRA)

The Umatilla National Forest utilizes a federal hiring authority to facilitate the hiring process at the end of the internship. Read more about VRA hiring and qualifications at: <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job-seekers/special-hiring-authorities/>

WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UMATILLA VETERAN CREW

Mt. Adams Institute hires 10 VetsWork GreenCorps interns. These 10 folks will make up half of what is collectively referred to as the Umatilla Vet Crew. The other 10 members are hired directly by the UNF. They are military veterans, but are coming into the crew with previous fire experience either through VetsWork GreenCorps (alumni), another internship program, a private contractor, or another government agency. Both halves of the crew will live and work together taking part in the same trainings and required fuels reduction work. UNF employees will receive different benefits and in some cases, may be dispatched out to fires before VetsWork GreenCorps Interns are ready.

FUELS REDUCTION

Most of the work that Interns will take on in the 13-week internship is the fuels reduction / vegetation management work that the UNF has identified as a key component in their fuels reductions agenda. Fuels reduction is arduous, repetitive work that takes place in the outdoors in all types of terrain and weather conditions. An example of fuels reduction: small trees and undergrowth are cut down and stacked for later burning. Participants should be physically

and mentally ready to work 10-hour days in challenging conditions. Participants who are hired by the Forest Service at the end of the internship will continue to focus on this type of work when the crew is not dispatched out to fires.

Please note: the initial 13 weeks of the program, Mt. Adams Institute / AmeriCorps Interns will NOT be dispatched out to fires. Once the program is complete and individuals have been hired by the Forest Service, opportunities to work fires will become available.

FIRE SCHOOL / RED CARD TRAINING

VetsWork GreenCorps Interns will take part (and must pass) a 5-day training to earn a “red card” certification. This certification allows individuals to fight fires with any agency in the country. This training is part of the internship and does not cost the participant.

PACK TEST

Interns must pass the Forest Service physical agility test at the “arduous” level. This is known as the PACK test and involves a 3-mile walk (no running or jogging) with a 45 pound pack, and must be completed in 45 minutes or less. This test is administered on the first day of the program, and all individuals must pass to move forward with the program. MAI and UNF staff recommend that participants begin an exercise program prior to the beginning of the internship.

MORE INFORMATION

We recommend you spend some time on our website getting a better feel for the program.

- Watch our [VetsWork Information Video](#)
- Read [blogs](#) from current and past participants
- Visualize it through our [live feed](#)
- You can also find us on [Facebook](#) or Instagram @mtadamsinstitute
- Read our [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Federal law and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) policy prohibit AmeriCorps Programs and Interns from engaging in certain activities while using Corporation funds or on Corporation time. Interns are not prohibited from engaging in any of these activities in their personal capacities and on their own time. If there is any question about whether a certain activity is permissible, please contact the Program Director. Examples of prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation or elected officials;
- g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to:
 - i. a business organized for profit;
 - ii. a labor union;
 - iii. a partisan political organization;

- iv. a non-profit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent Interns from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken on their own initiative; and
- v. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support the religious activities;
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- k. Such activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

THANK YOU

Thank you for considering an internship with Mt. Adams Institute's VetsWork GreenCorps Program. We appreciate your service and welcome the opportunity to work with you as you explore and create career opportunities in the natural resource management and public land management fields. We strive to be as transparent and informative about the program elements as possible so that all potential applicants feel empowered to decide if VetsWork GreenCorps truly is the "right fit". MAI and Umatilla National Forest staff are looking for a full commitment to the 13 weeks of the program, and we ask that you review the provided information fully and critically. Consider speaking with a trusted loved one or mentor as you move through the application process. Mt. Adams Institute Staff values relationship building and open communication; we are available to discuss any issues or concerns at any point during the application process. Don't hesitate to call / email / text.

We look forward to working with you.

Katie

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